

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07

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DLOS-04 SAL-01 INT-05 CG-00 DOTE-00 AS-01 /087 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7753

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NASSAU 0096

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT BF

SUBJ: LUNCHEON CONVERSATION WITH CECIL WALLACE-WHITFIELD:

PORTRAIT OF THE NEW FNM OPPOSITION PARTY LEADER

1. THE MAN. WALLACE-WHITFIELD, LIKE SO MANY OF THE OTHER LEADING POLITICAL FIGURES IN NASSAU, IS A BRITISH-TRAINED LAWYER. HE HAS A REPUTATION FOR SHREWDNESS, BUT NOT NECESSARILY FOR UNQUESTIONED INTEGRITY. HE IS PERSONABLE AND IS ADMITTEDLY THE ONLY POLITICIAN IN THE COUNTRY OTHER THAN PRIMIN PINDLING WHO IS CONCEDED TO HAVE GENUINE CHARISMA. HE TALKS AND ACTS AS ONE WOULD EXPECT OF A CONFIDENT POLITICIAN. IN CONTRAST TO HIS PREDECESSOR, KENDAL ISAACS, (A MAN OF UNQUESTIONED INTEGRITY BUT TOTALLY BLAND PERSONALITY) WHO RECENTLY ADMITTED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT THE FNM DID NOT HAVE MUCH CHANCE OF WINNING THE UPCOMING ELECTION, WALLACE-WHITFIELD TAKES AN EXACTLY CONTRARY POSITION. HE BELIEVES THE FNM WILL WIN GIVEN ENOUGH TIME FOR HIM TO ORGANIZE THE PARTY.

2. WALLACE-WHITFIELD'S IMMEDIATE POLITICAL PLANS. CONTRARY TO ALL OF THE PRESS, AS WELL AS PRIVATE, SPECULATION THAT KENDAL ISAACS WOULD GIVE UP HIS SEAT IN THE PARLIAMENT SO THAT WALLACE-WHITFIELD COULD STAND FOR THE SEAT IN AN IMMEDIATE BY-ELECTION, WALLACE-WHITFIELD REVEALED TO ME THAT NOTHING

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COULD BE FURTHER FROM HIS THINKING. TO STAND FOR SUCH A BY-

ELECTION WOULD BE TIME-CONSUMING AND DIVERT HIM FROM HIS TWO PRINCIPAL AND IMMEDIATE TASKS WHICH HE DEFINES AS: A) ORGANIZING THE FNM, AND B) DEFINING THE ISSUES IN PREPARATION FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS.

3. ELECTION ISSUES. AS TO THE ISSUES, WALLACE-WHITFIELD DEFINES THESE AS, FIRST AND FOREMOST, THE ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF THE COUNTRY, AND SECONDARILY ONE OF PERSONALITIES. INTERESTING ENOUGH IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HE DOES NOT EXPECT TO EMPHASIZE CORRUPTION (AN ISSUE WHICH ISAACS CITED AS PARAMOUNT). WHY NOT? BECAUSE, SAYS WALLACE-WHITFIELD, THE AVERAGE BAHAMIAN ATTITUDE WOULD BE, "WELL THEM OTHER GUYS DID IT WHEN THEY WERE IN POWER" (AND IMPLICITLY WOULD PROBABLY DO IT AGAIN). A RATHER INTERESTING INSIGHT COMING FROM WALLACE-WHITFIELD SINCE THERE ARE SOME WHO FEEL THAT HE HAS NOT IN THE PAST AND WOULD NOT NECESSARILY IN THE FUTURE BE ANY MORE HONEST THAN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT LEADERS.

AS TO THE ECONOMIC ISSUE, WALLACE-WHITFIELD MAINTAINS THE GOVERNMENT IS IN TROUBLE. (THIS IS A WIDELY SHARED VIEW.) THEY ARE HOPING FOR A "MIRACLE" WHICH WILL GIVE THE IMPRESSION OF A SUCCESSFUL ATTACK ON THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. (SEE MORE ON THIS BELOW.) AS FOR HIMSELF, HE IS IN PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AN ECONOMIC PROGRAM FOR THE COUNTRY WHICH THE FNM WILL PUT FORTH BASED ON RELYING ON A FREE ENTERPRISE, CAPITALISTIC ECONOMY.

IN TERMS OF PERSONALITIES, HE OBVIOUSLY THINKS THAT THE ADVANTAGE WHICH PINDLING HELD HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED (AT A MINIMUM) BY HIS, WALLACE-WHITFIELD'S, ASCENSION TO FNM LEADERSHIP. HE INTENDS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS ASSET.

AS FOR THE OPPOSITION, HE BELIEVES THEY WILL RUN A "RACIST" CAMPAIGN (ON THIS HE AGREES WITH KENDAL ISAACS, A MAN OF MODERATE VIEWS). THAT, PLUS THE ALLEGATION THAT THE PLP IS STILL THE PARTY THAT BROUGHT INDEPENDENCE TO THE BAHAMAS AND IS NOW MAKING ECONOMIC STRIDES, WILL BE PINDLING'S PLATFORM.

4. WHERE THE VOTES ARE TO COME FROM. WALLACE-WHITFIELD IMPLIED THAT A RATHER HEAVY RELIANCE WOULD BE PLACED ON SWEEPING CONFIDENTIAL

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THE OUT ISLANDS. OF THE 18 OUT-ISLANDS SEATS, HE SPECULATES THAT PERHAPS ONLY TWO OR THREE WILL GO TO THE PLP WITH THE FNM HAVING A GOOD CHANCE OF TAKING THE REMAINDER. HE ALSO, HOWEVER, EXPECTS TO MAKE DEEP INROADS INTO PREVIOUS PLP SUPPORT ON NEW PROVIDENCE AND CLAIMS TO HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED CONFIDENTIAL PLEDGES FROM OSTENSIBLY CURRENT PLP SUPPORTERS. HE ALSO HOPES TO CAPITALIZE ON WHAT HE BELIEVES ARE DEEP INNER SCHISMS WITHIN THE PLP. CONVERSELY, WHEN I QUERIED HIM AS

TO WHETHER THE FNM WOULD NOT BE HURT BY THE APPARENT DIS-AFFECTION OF SENATOR ARTHUR FOULKES, AN ANNOUNCED OPPONENT OF WALLACE-WHITFIELD'S LEADERSHIP, WALLACE-WHITFIELD'S REACTION WAS THAT FOULKES CARRIED NO POLITICAL CLOUT.

5. CAN YOU HELP ME? SPEAKING ONLY CIRCUITOUSLY ENOUGH SO A DIRECT QUOTE OF HIS WORDS WOULD PERMIT HIM TO MAKE A DENIAL, WALLACE-WHITFIELD INQUIRED AS TO WHETHER HE COULD EXPECT MY SUPPORT (I.E. THE USG'S). FAINING( # ) LACK OF COMPREHENSION, I ASKED HIM TO BE LESS CRYPTIC. HE INDICATED TWO AREAS. FIRST, HE EXPECTS THE PLP TO LAUNCH THE LONG-TOUTED CONVENTION CENTER CONSTRUCTION PRIOR TO THE ELECTIONS. SINCE THIS WILL BE A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR PROJECT PROVIDING CONSIDERABLE JOBS, IT WOULD BE EXPECTED TO GAIN WIDE AND FAVORABLE PUBLICITY. WALLACE-WHITFIELD WONDERED ALOUD WHETHER "YOU COULD HOLD OFF YOUR SUPPORT UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS." I RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT WE HAD NOTHING DIRECTLY TO DO WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION OR FUTURE PLANNING ON THE CONVENTION CENTER. WE HAD NOT BEEN ASKED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE IN FUNDING THE PROJECT, NOR DID I THINK WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DO SO IF ASKED. WHILE AMERICANS MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN CONTRACTING TO DEVELOP THE CENTER, IF THEY WERE THEIR FINANCING WOULD BE THROUGH PRIVATE CHANNELS. WALLACE-WHITFIELD ACCEPTED BOTH POINTS, BUT NEVERTHELESS VAGUELY MAINTAINED THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING WE COULD DO INDIRECTLY."

HIS SECOND POINT WAS AGAIN PUT IN AN INTENTIONALLY CIRCUITOUS FASHION, BUT WHAT I INTERPRETED IT TO AMOUNT TO WAS A REQUEST FOR DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO THE FNM, PRESUMABLY FINANCIAL. THE FNM IS, ACCORDING TO WALLACE-WHITFIELD, IN DIFFICULT FINANCIAL STRAITS. "IT'S IN THE RED." WALLACE-WHITFIELD EXPECTS THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO BE EXPENSIVE AND CLEARLY ONE OF HIS MAJOR PROBLEMS, HE MAINTAINS, IS WHERE TO GET THE MONEY. (IN A CONFIDENTIAL

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SENSE THIS IS STRANGE SINCE THE FNM HAS MANY VERY WEALTHY

NOTE BY OC/T: ( # ) AS RECEIVED.

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NASSAU 0096

SUPPORTERS ON THE ISLAND. ON THE OTHER HAND, ONE OF THEM, SIR ROLAN KONETTE THE FIRST PRIMIN OF THE BAHAMAS AND ELDER STATESMAN OF THE FNM, HAS TOLD ME HE WOULD NOT TRUST WALLACE-WHITFIELD AS FAR AS HE COULD THROW HIM. PRESUMABLY LITTLE IF ANY FINANCIAL SUPPORT WILL COME FROM SUCH FNM MEMBERS.) IN ANY EVENT, I RESPONDED TO WALLACE-WHITFIELD BY SAYING THAT QUITE OBVIOUSLY THE USG WOULD BE ENTIRELY NEUTRAL WITH REGARD TO THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS. I SAW NO POSSIBILITY OF OUR PROVIDING "ASSISTANCE" (THE WORD HE USED) TO EITHER PARTY. WALLACE-WHITFIELD'S COMMENT, WHEN WE PARTED A LITTLE LATER, WAS "WELL THERE IS STILL LOTS OF TIME UNTIL THE ELECTION," THE IMPLICATION BEING THAT WE MIGHT IN DUE COURSE CHANGE OUR MINDS ABOUT BEING HELPFUL.

6. TIMING OF ELECTION AND FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS. WALLACE-WHITFIELD'S JUDGMENT IS THAT THE ELECTION WILL TAKE PLACE "ABOUT EASTER." (THIS CORRESPONDS TO EMBASSY THINKING BASED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, UPON THE APPARENT INTEREST IN THE GCOB IN WINDING UP THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS BY MARCH 31. IN CONNECTION WITH THE LATTER, I MADE SURE THAT WALLACE-WHITFIELD UNDERSTOOD, AS I HAD PREVIOUSLY CLARIFIED WITH KENDAL ISAACS, THAT THE USG WAS IN THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATING A BASE AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD INVOLVE A QUID. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER KENDAL ISAACS UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS COULD CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE FNM ELECTION POSSIBILITIES IF THE PLP CHOOSES TO PROJECT THE AGREEMENT WITH THE U.S. AS A MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VICTORY. WALLACE-WHITFIELD

GAVE NO CLEAR INDICATION AS TO WHETHER HE SO COMPREHENDED THIS POSSIBILITY, BUT BEING A SHREWDER POLITICIAN THAN ISAACS, I WOULD EXPECT THAT HE WILL UNDERSTAND THIS POINT, THOUGH

WHAT IF ANYTHING HE CAN DO ABOUT IT, I DO NOT KNOW.)

7. MISCELLANEOUS. WALLACE-WHITFIELD ASKED WHETHER I DISCERNED AN ANTI-AMERICAN TENDENCY IN THE LOBSTER NEGOTIATIONS. I SAID I DID NOT. I EXPLAINED OUR ANALYSIS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION ON ECONOMIC, NATIONALISTIC AND CULTURAL GROUNDS. WALLACE-WHITFIELD APPEARED TO AGREE. HE SAID HE EXPECTED A BAHAMIAN/CUBAN AGREEMENT ON FIN FISHING (AS DO I), BUT AGREED WITH MY ASSESSMENT THAT NO AGREEMENT WAS LIKELY BETWEEN THOSE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON LOBSTERS.

HE OFFERED THE VIEW THAT "PAUL ADDERLEY MAY NOW HAVE WON HIS SPURS" AND THUS MAY BE PUT UP BY THE GOVERNMENT TO RUN AS A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT IN PLACE OF ONE OF THE DISSIDENT BACK-BENCHERS. ALTERNATIVELY, HE MIGHT RUN FOR CLEMENT MAYNARD'S SEAT. "MAYNARD DOESN'T LIKE POLITICAL FIGHTING AND WOULD PROBABLY BE MORE COMFORTABLE IN NEW YORK, WASHINGTON OR LONDON" (I.E., AS AN AMBASSADOR).

WALLACE-WHITFIELD'S MAJOR CONCERN IS THAT PINDLING WILL CALL FOR ELECTIONS BEFORE HE HAS THE TWO TO THREE MONTHS NECESSARY TO ORGANIZE THE FNM.

8. CONCLUDING COMMENT. WHILE THE FNM HAS ALWAYS STRUCK THE POSTURE OF BEING A BETTER FRIEND TO THE U.S. THAN THE PLP (AND I THINK GENUINELY THINKS OF ITSELF AS SUCH), I WOULD IN NO SENSE BE INCLINED TO IMPOSE MUCH TRUST IN WALLACE-WHITFIELD. THAT HE IS SHREWD AND ABLE THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT. IT IS CERTAINLY NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE FNM COULD UPSET THE PLP UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP. (THEY START WITH A BASE OF 43 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE IN THE LAST ELECTION AND PROBABLY SOME DISAFFECTION WITH THE PLP SINCE THAT TIME.) HOWEVER, ONCE HAVING GAINED POWER, THAT WALLACE-WHITFIELD WOULD BE ANY MORE PREDISPOSED TO BE FRIENDLY TO THE U.S. OR ANY LESS  
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PREDISPOSED TO LOOK OUT FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL AND POLITICAL INTERESTS THAN IS THE PRESENT PRIME MINISTER IS MUCH IN DOUBT. WHILE THE EMBASSY WILL, OF COURSE, TRY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE AISLE AS THE ELECTION APPROACHES, IT IS APPARENT THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BE MOST CAUTIOUS IN DEALING WITH WALLACE-WHITFIELD LEST HE SOMEHOW TRY TO CAPITALIZE UPON AN ALLEGED SUPPORT FROM THE USG.

9. AND AS A FINAL POSTSCRIPT, WHEN I MENTIONED LATER THE SAME DAY TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT I HAD HAD LUNCH WITH AN ADMIRER OF HIS, WALLACE-WHITFIELD, HE LAUGHED AND SAID, "HE ADMIRES ME SO MUCH HE WANTS MY JOB." WHEN I ASKED, "WHAT'S HIS CHANCES?" THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED, "NO CHANCE, MAN, NO CHANCE."  
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